

REMARKS

By this Amendment, claims 1, 2, 22, 23, and 26 are amended, and claims 24 and 28 are canceled. Accordingly, claims 1-23, 25-27, and 29 are pending in this application. Reconsideration and allowance of the pending claims are respectfully requested.

Applicants gratefully acknowledge the indication that claims 1-21 are allowed and that 24, 25, 28, and 29 contain allowable subject matter. Independent claims 22 and 26 are rewritten to include the allowable subject matter of claims 24 and 28, respectively, and claims 24 and 28 are herein canceled. Accordingly, independent claims 22 and 26, and dependent claims 25 and 29 that depend therefrom are likewise allowable. Withdrawal of the objection is respectfully requested.

Claims 22, 23, 26, and 27 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,497,619 to Dowdy et al. (“Dowdy”). Based upon the amendments to claims 22 and 26 as submitted above, Applicants respectfully submit that the rejection over Dowdy is overcome. Claims 23 and 27 depend from independent claim 22 and 26 and are likewise patentable over Dowdy at least for their dependence on an allowable base claim, as well as for additional features they recite. Withdrawal of the rejection over Dowdy is respectfully requested.

In addition, claims 1, 2, 22, and 26 are amended to correct minor grammatical errors and to conform the claims to accepted U.S. patent practice.

All objections and rejections have been addressed. In view of the foregoing, Applicants respectfully submit that the application is in condition for allowance and favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance of claims 1-23, 25-27, and 29 are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

To the extent necessary, a petition for an extension of time under 37 C.F.R. 1.136 is hereby made. Please charge any shortage in fees due in connection with the filing of this paper, including extension of time fees, to Deposit Account 07-1337 and please credit any excess fees to such deposit account.

Respectfully submitted,

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